






# Wee Reusables

It doesn't take much to get started on a Wee Crafts program. Many creative crafts can be made from items around the house that are normally thrown away or recycled. We have provided a Parent Letter at the end of the "Wee Recycling Center" chapter of the **Wee Recyclers Activity Guide** for you to use that asks for donations of a variety of reusable materials. Collect items throughout the year, sort them, and store in appropriate containers. In the art area of your classroom, have a surplus of reusable odds and ends for children to create monsters, robots, rockets and more. The following crafts call for many of these reusables.

## Decorated Containers

Make a vase, candle holder or pen/pencil holder for someone special.

### Materials:

-  containers (clean and empty glass bottles or jars, plastic detergent bottles cut at the "waist," paperboard juice cans, half gallon juice or milk carton cut in half)
-  glue
-  scissors
-  work area covered with newspaper
-  decorating materials: tissue paper scraps, dried seeds or beans, dry cereal, yarn or ribbon scraps, cloth scraps, different types of macaroni, etc.

### Procedure:





1. Prior to class, select the containers for children to decorate. If working with plastic bottles, place them in hot water for a few minutes to make them easier to cut. Cut them at the "waist."
2. Children should select decorating materials and place these in their work area.
3. Have children spread glue on the surface of the container using their fingers (a small section should be done at a time).
4. Have children cover the glued area with their decorating materials.
5. **Optional:** When glue is dry, paint over the surface with shellac.



## Wind Chime

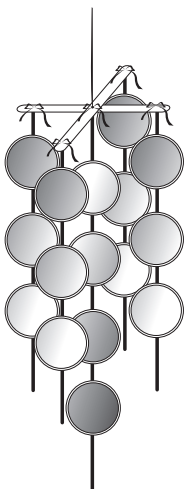
Add a little music to your deck, garden or backyard!

### Materials:


-  popsicle sticks
-  yarn
-  sixteen tin lids (from juice containers, canned goods, jars, etc.)
-  strong glue

### Procedure:

1. Glue together two popsicle sticks in the shape of an X.
2. Cut four 12 inch pieces and one 18 inch piece of yarn.



3. Leaving about 2 inches at the top, glue three lids evenly spaced on each of the four 12 inch pieces of yarn. Use strong glue directly down the middle of each lid. Allow glue to dry and tie each piece to the end of a stick.










 **Note:** Be sure there are no sharp edges on lids. Also, different sized lids will produce different tones.

4. Again leaving about 2 inches at the top, glue four lids evenly spaced directly down the middle of each lid onto the 18 inch piece of yarn. The last lid should be located at the very bottom of the string. Allow glue to dry and tie to the middle of the sticks.
5. Add a 6 inch piece of yarn to the middle of the sticks for hanging.

## Bunny Basket

A tisket, a tasket, make a bunny basket!

### Materials:

-  clean, plastic one-gallon milk jug
-  6-inch pipe cleaners
-  12-inch pipe cleaners
-  two large cotton balls
-  permanent markers or crayons
-  glue
-  scissors or craft knife
-  shredded paper or packing material for "grass"
-  paper punch

### Procedure:

1. The basket handle can be made in one of two ways. You may either retain the handle of the milk jug by cutting above it (see fig. 1), or cut off the milk jug handle, punch a hole on either side of the basket and attach pipe cleaners for a handle (see fig. 2). Draw the appropriate cutting line around the jug and cut out the basket.
2. Make two slits on either side of where the nose will be with a knife or the pointed end of a scissors.

3. Children can color the outside of the basket using crayons or permanent markers. Talk about the fact that real bunnies have two eyes, a nose and a mouth.
4. Help children weave 6 inch pipe cleaners through the slits by the nose to make whiskers.
5. Children can glue cotton balls on the bunny for its nose and for its puffy tail.
6. Fill the basket half-full with shredded paper or packing material.

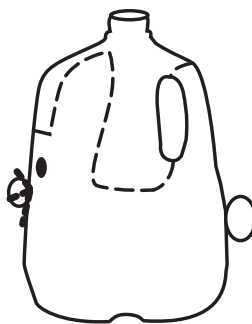


figure 1

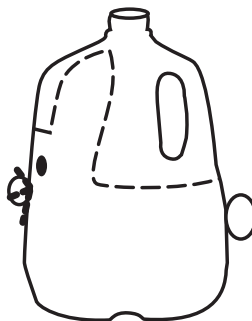
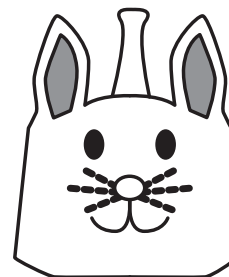
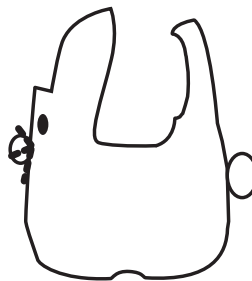
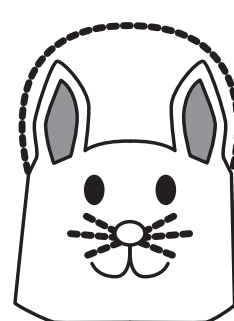
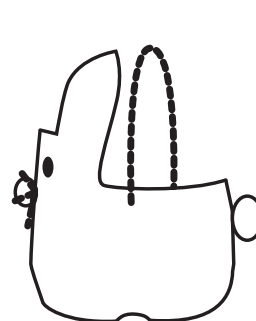











figure 2



## Newspaper Snowperson

Build a snowperson out of reusable “snow.” Because this snow will not melt, you can plan a few days to complete your snowperson.

### Materials:

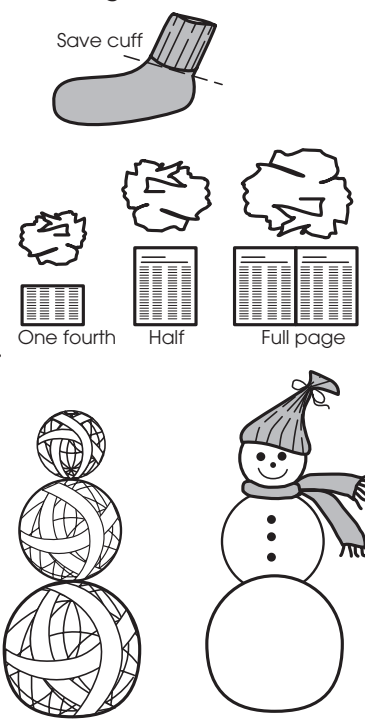
-  sheets of newspaper: full, half and one-fourth sheets
-  rolls of masking tape
-  yarn scraps
-  strips of fabric
-  thick, white paint (poster paint or indoor latex paint works best)
-  paint brushes
-  black marker
-  cuff cut from a child’s old sock (have children bring these from home)
-  art apron

### Procedure:

1. Several days before conducting this activity, ask parents to donate old children’s socks. Cut the socks at the ankle, save the cuff for this project and save the rest for another project.
2. During the first session, give each child a set of newspaper sheets. Have them crumble each piece into a ball. Give children strips of masking tape to wrap around the three newspaper balls. The balls should be almost completely covered with tape. Flatten the bottom of the largest ball so it doesn’t

roll. Help children stack the balls on top of one another and tape them in place.






3. During the second session, prepare a work area for children to paint their snowperson. Indoor latex paint works best. Ask for a can to be donated by a parent or a local paint dealer. If latex paint is not available, mix a thick batch of poster paint. Children can paint their snowperson so that no newspaper or tape shows through. Allow the snowpeople to dry completely before continuing.
4. During the last session, children can draw features on their snowperson using a black marker. Give each child a sock cuff. Pull the uncut end of the cuff onto the snowperson’s head. With a small piece of yarn, tie off the cut end of the cuff to complete the hat. Finally tie a small strip of fabric around the snowperson’s neck to make a scarf.



## Snow Globes

Create snow globes for a treasure that every child can enjoy!

### Materials:

-  glass jars with lids (thoroughly cleaned)
-  strong glue
-  baby oil
-  glitter
-  small plastic toys (animals, people, trees, etc.)



### Procedure:

1. Using strong glue, attach a plastic toy to the inside of a jar lid. Allow glue to dry.
2. After glue is done drying, fill the jar with baby oil and add glitter.
3. Keeping the glass jar right side up, insert plastic toy into the baby oil inside the jar and tighten lid.
4. Turn sealed jar upside down so the lid is the surface side.






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## Recycled Paper Beads

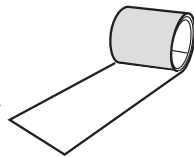
Use old magazines and catalogs to make paper beads and turn them into a necklace or bracelet.

### Materials:

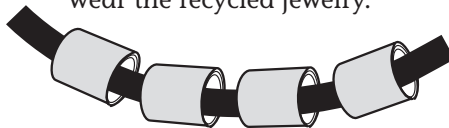
-  Brightly colored paper from magazines, gift wrap or catalogs
-  White glue or glue stick
-  String, yarn or fishing line

### Procedure:

1. Cut paper into strips that are 1 inch wide and 4 inches long.



2. Spread glue over half of the paper strip.
3. Starting with the unglued end, roll up the paper. Be sure to leave a hole in the middle so string or yarn can go through it. For younger children, using a thin marker or crayon might make it easier to roll. Be sure to leave enough space to easily remove the paper bead.
4. Repeat making beads until there are enough for a bracelet or necklace.
5. String beads onto the string or yarn. Tie up and wear the recycled jewelry.








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## String-Along Reusables

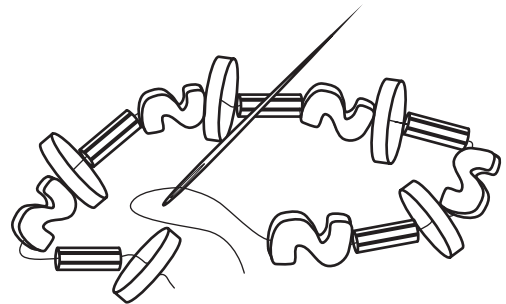
Make necklaces or garlands for holiday decoration.

### Materials:

-  plastic bottle caps
-  recycled paper beads (see activity "Recycled Paper Beads")
-  drinking straws cut to various lengths
-  long pieces of colored string or yarn
-  large needles (2 inches long)

### Procedure:

1. Before class, pound a hole in each of the plastic bottle caps with a hammer and nail.



2. Help children thread a needle.
3. Let children string the paper beads, bottle caps and straw pieces together on the colored string.







**CAUTION:** Small pieces may be swallowed by young children. Only do this activity with older children and under strict supervision.

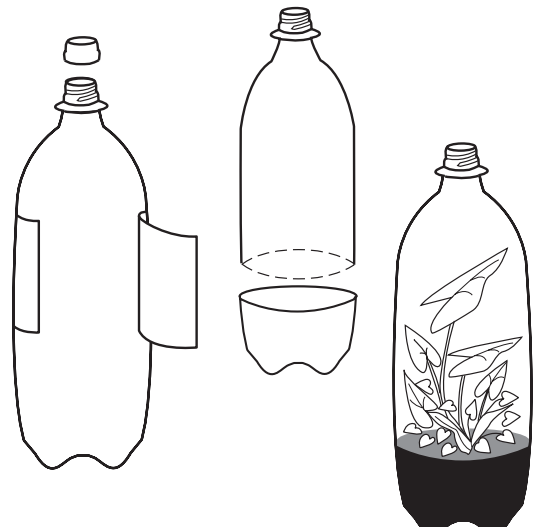
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## Soda Bottle Greenhouses

This can be a group project in which children can work together to build a greenhouse and learn what plants need to grow.

### Materials:

-  2-liter clear plastic soda bottle with the cap still on
-  small stones
-  potting soil
-  scissors
-  plant seeds or small plants that like lots of moisture
-  water



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## Procedure:









1. One bottle is needed for each greenhouse. To remove the label, fill the bottle one quarter full with hot tap water. Screw the cap back on firmly. Tip the bottle on its side so that the hot water warms the area where the label is attached to the bottle – this will soften the heat sensitive glue. Slowly peel the label from the bottle.
2. With a sharp scissors, cut around the bottom of the bottle (about 3 inches from bottom) to create a base.
3. Use the base of the bottle for the “pot.” Have your children put small stones in the bottom of the base to help with drainage. Next have them add enough potting soil to almost fill the base.
4. Help them plant their seeds or small plants. Let them pack the soil over the seeds or around the plants and add a little water.
5. Help each of them place the upper portion of the bottle on top of the base. Twist slightly to work the clear edge into the soil about one quarter inch. Place the small greenhouses on a window ledge where they can get some, but not too much, sunlight.
6. Caring for the greenhouse is easy. If the bottle cap remains screwed in place, the greenhouse should be self-watering. If too much condensation develops on the inside of the bottle wall, remove the cap for a few hours and then screw it back on. If the plants do not appear to have enough water, remove the cap and add a little water through the opening. Screw the cap back on tightly.
7. Check the greenhouse two times a week with your children. Make a chart to record the children’s observations of plant growth and moisture content.

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## Coin-Keeper Creatures

Reusing “trash” for crafts is like money in the bank.

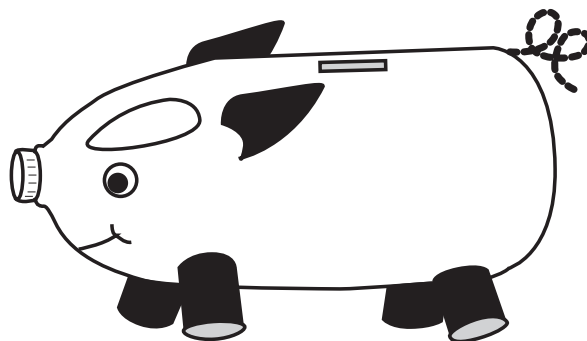
### Materials:

-  plastic 1-gallon bottles from bleach, juice or vinegar (they should have a screw-type cap)
-  film canisters or plastic bottle
-  caps
-  pipe cleaners
-  scraps of paper
-  glue
-  scissors
-  markers

### Procedure:

1. Clean bottles thoroughly.
2. Give each child a bottle. Tell your children to look at the bottle and imagine what creature the bottle looks like. Suggest laying the bottle on its side or turning it upside down. They may see a pig, a cow or maybe a monster. Once the child decides, help him/her to create the animal.
3. Children can cut features from construction paper and glue them onto the bottle, or features can be drawn on with a marker.

4. To make a curly tail, twist a pipe cleaner around a pencil and then slide it off. With the tip of a scissors poke a hole for the tail at the base of the bottle. Stick the pipe cleaner tail into the hole and secure it with a drop of glue.










5. Cut a slot, large enough to fit a fifty cent piece in, on the upper portion of the bottle.
6. Glue film canisters or plastic bottle caps on the bottom of the bottle for legs.
7. Feed coins to your coinkeeper creature. If you want your coins back, just unscrew the cap and dump them out.

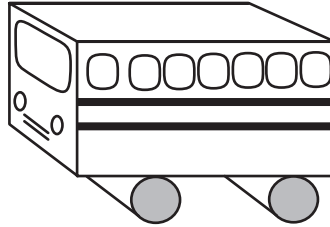
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## Wee-Mobile

All aboard the Wee-mobile!

### Materials:

-  clean paperboard milk carton (quart or half gallon size) or rectangular tissue box
-  large paper bags cut open and flattened
-  toilet paper rolls
-  glue
-  scissors
-  tape
-  crayons or markers



### Procedure:








1. Press in the milk carton spout and tape it flat.
2. Cut a paper bag along several of the seams to open it flat. Help each child wrap the milk carton or tissue box with the paper bag and tape it in place.
3. Let children design their Wee-mobile with crayons or markers. Glue toilet paper tubes to the bottom of the vehicle to make wheels.
5. Discuss with your children what the Wee-mobiles could be used for.

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## Bird Feeder

Reusing is for the birds.

### Materials:

-  plastic 2-liter soda bottles
-  8 inch stick or dowels (1/4" diameter)
-  birdseed
-  craft knife
-  nail
-  hole punch
-  thin wire

### Procedure:

1. Use a craft knife to cut two 3 inch holes across from each other near the base of a 2 liter bottle.
2. Make a small hole with a hole punch 1 inch below each larger hole.
3. Insert a stick or dowel through the two holes to make a perch.
4. Poke small holes in the bottom of the bottle with a nail to let rain water drain out.
5. Poke two holes across from each other near the top of the bottle. Thread the wire through the holes and twist the ends together to make a hanger.

6. Children can help fill the feeders with birdseed.
7. Hang a feeder in a tree near a classroom window. Make a chart to keep near the window to record how many birds come to dine and note which species are the most common. Look these species up in a bird book to learn more about their habits.
8. Send a copy of these directions home with each child so that they can make feeders with their families.

For more bird feeder variations using recyclables, visit: [www.dnr.wi.gov/eeek](http://www.dnr.wi.gov/eeek). Search: Backyard Bird Feeders











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## Classy Covers

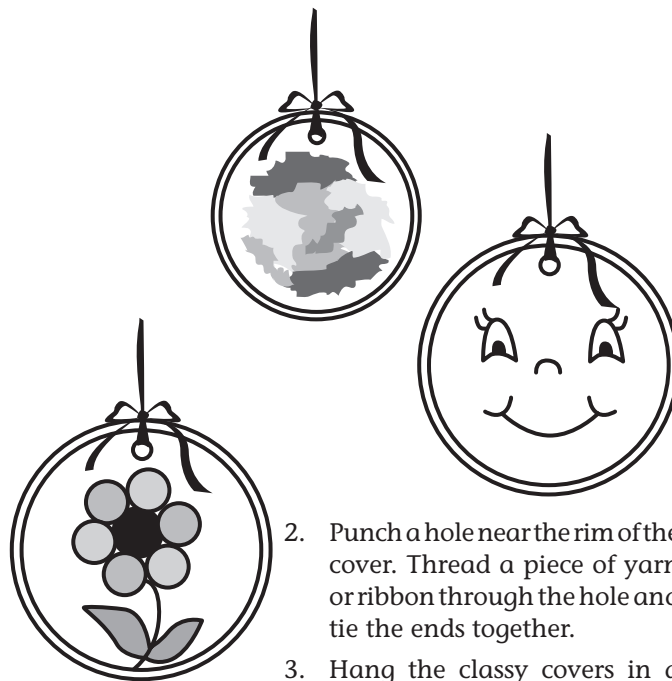
Create beautiful sun catchers and ornaments to display throughout the year.

### Materials:

-  clear covers from yogurt cups, deli containers or pre-packaged lunch meats
-  scraps of colored tissue paper
-  permanent markers
-  white glue
-  hole punch
-  pieces of yarn or ribbon

### Procedure:

1. Let your children tear colored tissue paper into small pieces and glue the pieces onto the clear plastic cover in a design or collage. Variation: Use permanent markers to draw a design onto the plastic surface.









2. Punch a hole near the rim of the cover. Thread a piece of yarn or ribbon through the hole and tie the ends together.
3. Hang the classy covers in a window or on a holiday tree.

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## Snow, Fur, Wool

Ever wonder what to do with all those polystyrene packing pieces? Turn them into “snow,” “fur” or “wool.”

### Materials:

-  scissors
-  large sheet of paper
-  glue
-  polystyrene packing pieces
-  markers
-  crayons

### Procedure:

1. Draw the outline of an animal or object that is usually white on the large sheet of paper. Give this to your children.
2. Have your children color in eyes, nose, mouth, hooves, claws, etc., with markers. Let them glue packing pieces onto the paper to make white “snow,” “fur” or “wool.”

**CAUTION:** Small pieces may be swallowed by young children. Only do this activity with older children and under strict supervision.

